

**BALLINACOURTY
NATIONAL SCHOOL**

1885 - 1969

The Memories Between Us
1885—1969

BALLINACOURTY NATIONAL SCHOOL

THE MEMORIES BETWEEN US
1885 – 1969

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Ballinacourty NS 2016

INTRODUCTION

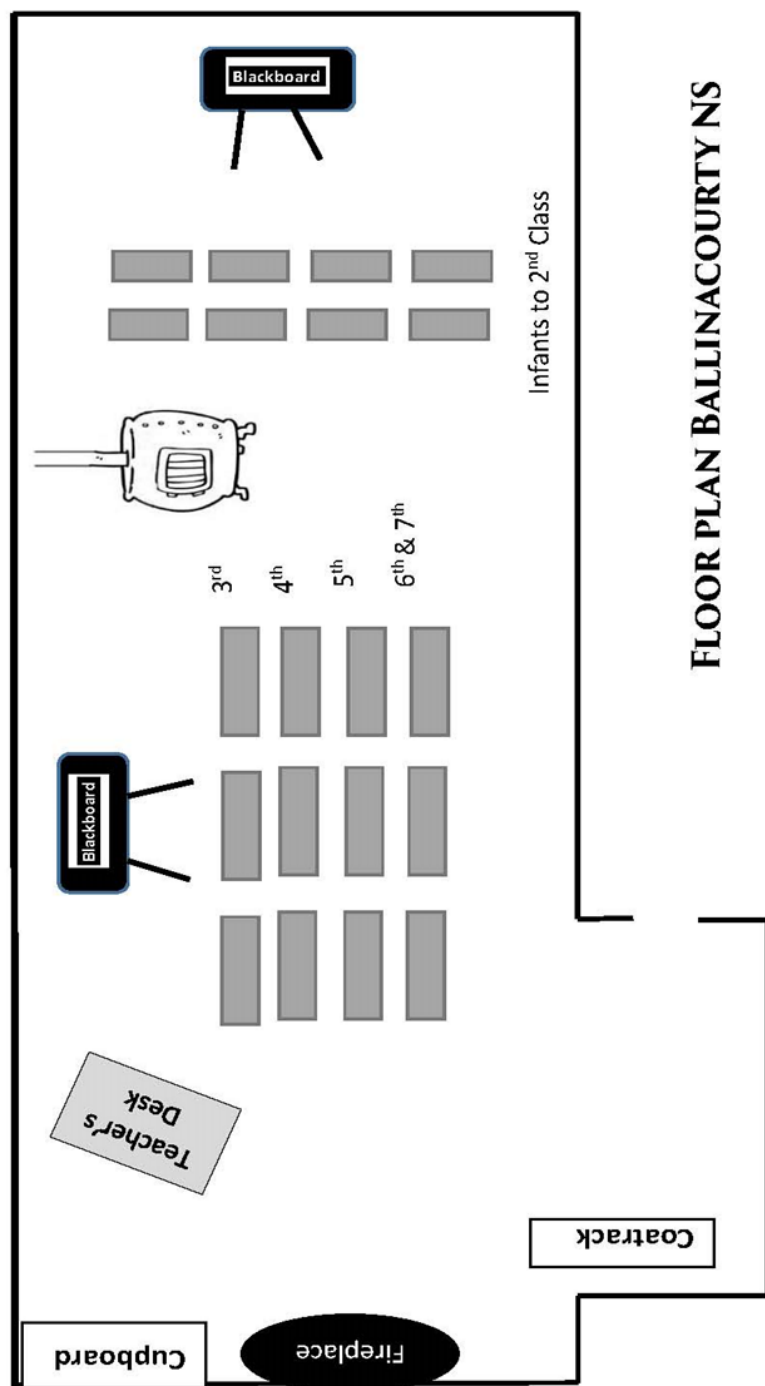
Since 1885 the Schoolhouse in Ballinacourty has been an integral part of the landscape of the area. It is an OPW functional design of its time where a school with one room was a standard feature. A similar school was built around the same era in Killnaboy Co. Clare. Of significance in Co. Waterford at the time was the establishment in 1878 of the Lismore to Waterford Railway and nationally the foundation of the GAA in 1884. In particular the Railway line changed the way business was done in Ballinacourty. Now local farmers could trade their crops and move cattle and previously isolated rural communities could travel with greater ease.

Coupled with the changing travel facilities in the area, the influence of many schoolhouses similar to Ballinacourty NS is widely recognised. *'Here friends were made and lessons were learned. Belief systems, traditions and moral codes were imprinted on young minds.'*¹

What started as a chat with Johnny Foley about the links between the Foley and Norris family trees grew and thus the idea for this booklet and reunion event evolved. Research saw dusty boxes being pulled from many attics and from under beds! These brought to light again beautiful black and white photos and led to lively conversations, which re-awakened long forgotten memories.

Until 1969 the children of local families were educated in the building that is now used to house machinery from the Gold Coast Golf Club. It remains as a legacy of a much changed rural Irish landscape. In effect this book is a timely memoir of our School that has now been closed for fifty years. Whether we are aware of it or not, the days spent in Ballinacourty NS have had an enduring influence in the lives of all past pupils both at home and abroad and one to which many emotional connections still remain in 2019.

¹ Deserted Schoolhouses of Ireland Enda O'Flaherty (2018)



THE SCHOOL BUILDING

In 1912 there were six National Schools in the parish of Abbeyside, Ballinroad and Garranbane under the management of the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore. Male and female schools at Abbeyside and Garranbane and mixed schools at Ballinroad and Ballinacourty². Built in 1885, the Ballinacourty NS is made of beautiful cut stone and is reputed to have been built by stonemason Larry Doran (Wexford), who had a connection to the Elsted family. An identical school was built in Kilnaboy Co. Clare in 1884. The Ballinacourty school building was one roomed and over its eighty four year span numerous people maintained and cleaned it; Johnny Morrissey (Snr.), Tom Burke, and the Elsted family to name but a few while Billix Murray painted the building during the Summer holidays.

The building's slate roof and chimney seemed to dominate the Ballinacourty landscape. A map with the old spelling of Ballynacourty shows houses in the vicinity of the school as well as across the road from the pub. The pier at Wyse's Point, boat house, and Coast Guard Station are clearly visible highlighting the maritime influence on the area.



1946 Mary Elsted

School Inspectors commented in 1886 of the newly opened school that the *'building was in excellent repair'*. This can be contrasted in 1894 with their observation that *'the chimney smokes so as to make the schoolroom almost unbearable'* and in 1907 with *'Roof repairs needed'*.

² Parochial History of Waterford and Lismore during the 18th and 19th Century

As the years went on, more repairs were needed and rodents were an ongoing and ever present issue as they resided in the floor boards underneath the school room. One pupil recalled how on finishing the school day and putting away books he found a rat in his school bag! Another recalled the consternation on arriving into school one morning to find a rat had escaped the trap but had left one leg behind. Interesting times indeed!

As the school was actually on a Golf Course, there was always a danger of windows being broken and it was a regular occurrence. Jimmy Norris recalls; *'A window was struck while an infants class were standing underneath it. Three panes of glass were broken, but luckily the golf ball hit the frame and didn't come through it. While there were glass splinters nobody was injured. Miss Brennock was not impressed and immediately took off out the door and up to the Golf Club to speak to the offenders!'*

Did you know?

Although Ballinacourty NS was tucked away on a quiet road the outside world was known to impinge on the life of the school. During and after the Second World War, mines came up along the Channel and washed up along the coast. Unaware of the danger they posed, the then school children remember such events as one of excitement. These mines led to the school being evacuated and pupils sheltered across the road for safety until the errant device could be made safe and lessons could resume. Much to the delight of the pupils during war times also it would not have been unusual for a plane to land beside the School given that it was located on a Golf Course.

LIFE IN THE SCHOOL

It was a great privilege to be given the honour of ringing the school bell, calling pupils to start the school day. A particular memory for a very young pupil was ringing the bell over the quarry wall only to have the tongue of the bell disappear down over the wall never to be seen again. Thankfully the story had a happy ending when her father made a new tongue, saving the day and most likely her hands too from the punishment of the ever present cane!

There was only one outside ‘dry’ toilet for all the pupils. If this happened in 2019 Health and Safety Regulations would run into volumes regarding the hygiene risks! The toilet consisted of two planks of timber with large round hole in it. The junior classes had a fear of disappearing while in the toilet and older pupils who were supervising feared losing their charges in the same manner. Teresa O’Brien remembers; *‘Each day a fresh basin of cold water was filled and used throughout the day for all pupils to wash their hands after which everyone used the same towel’*

Most pupils had their lunch in school and brought sandwiches from home in brown paper bags. How they envied those who could run home for lunch! However, lunches improved with the introduction of the Thermos Flasks. Although very fragile they still enhanced lunchtime. The Elsteds went home for lunch and sometimes had orders for ‘Choc ices, peggys legs, penny toffees, bulls eyes and jelly babies’. Michael Hanrahan still remembers that during lunchtime Miss Brennock had coffee. It was something that was seen as exotic and very different to the tea everyone else had at home.



Playtime was very important to all the pupils in Ballinacourty NS. They would run out the door at break and lunch times to play. A line was drawn in the gravel to divide the playground



between the boys and girls section. The boys mostly playing football sometimes with a 'Quix' bottle and girls skipped with both playing 'tig', chase and tug-of-war games. The girls have very vivid memories of playing ball against the gable end of the school and also playing games such as 'Queennio Queenio who has the Ball', 'Mrs. McGee went out to Tea'. Another very popular game was 'The Big Ship sailed in the Alley Alleyo'.

1938 Mikie, Chrissy, John and Kathleen Hogan

Plainy, clappy, roly, Foley. hippy, backy, right hand. Left hand, heisty high, lowsty low tip my heel, tip my toe, eagles mouth, jelly bag and a basket

Mrs. Magee went out to Tea, she locked the door, she dropped the key, I heard the officers say, quick march, under the arch, salute the officer, bow to the Queen, tip the ground, and merry go round.

1927 Ballinacourty NS



5th Row (Back) – Johnny Daly, Mickey Daly, Mikey Morrissey. **4th Row** – Mrs. Mather NT, Hannah Daly, Kathleen Daly, Mary Foley, Biddy Fitzgerald, Monnie Foley, Paddy Daly, John Elsted, Dick Joy, Cissie Power, Nan Meehan, Stattia Foley, Nell Power NT. **3rd Row** – Tom Kiely, Kitty Joy, Molly Meehan, Kitty Fitzgerald, Mary Hanrahan, Molly Kiely, Cissie Barry, Cissie Elsted, Bridgie Kiely, Josie Flynn, Norah Daly, Josie Daly, Mary Flynn, Bridie Daly, Noreen Daly. **2nd Row** – Mickey Foley, Paddy Brien, Maura Daly, Josie Hanrahan, Maudie Joy, Mary Barry, Kitty Foley, Maggie Flynn, Paddy Doyle, Eileen Daly, Deckie Foley. **1st Row** – Paddy Foley, Willie Joy, Sean Foley, Seamus Norris, John Kiely, Eddie Elsted, Eileen Fitzgerald, Paddy Norris.



ROYAL NATIONAL LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION.

(Supported solely by Voluntary Contributions.)

Patrons—
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"LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION."
LONDON.

22, CHARING CROSS ROAD, LONDON, W.C. 2.

Telephone:—
2954 "GERARD" EXCHANGE.

29th October, 1919.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS
SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO
THE SECRETARY,
ROYAL NATIONAL
LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION.

Dear Sir,

I have the pleasure to inform you that a War Savings Certificate and a Certificate of Merit have been awarded to William John Mateer of your School, in the Prize Essay Competition on the Life-Boat Service this year. It is very gratifying to me to note that the success of your School last year is thus repeated.

This is a proof that the keen interest taken by yourself and your pupils in the national and heroic work of the Life-Boat Service is fully maintained, a fact which must be of great advantage in training the children of the present generation in those qualities of courage, self-sacrifice and humanity which are so urgently needed in the great work of reconstruction which lies before us.

Yours faithfully,

Secretary.

The Head Master,
Ballinacourty National School,
Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS! ANOTHER WEEK TO WIN A PRIZE!

Winners of the NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS! of 2/6 for the best letters received by us. Letters must be written in either Irish or English; but those written in the word "IRISH" written after the word "New Year" will be given the preference. Letters written in English only shall be accepted. Letters written in the left-hand only shall be accepted. Letters must not be more than 100 words in length. Letters must be written on one side of the paper only, and the competitor's name, age and address must be given on top of the first page. The AGE LIMIT for this competition is 10, but age will be taken into consideration when judging; so that juniors and seniors will have an equal chance. Letters, addressed to the Editor, THE STANDARD, 1 Cavendish Row, Dublin, and marked, as directed above, must reach the office not later than the first Saturday morning, January 2.

POSTSCRIPT: "Excellent essays, sorry could not give prizes to all"

HEATING

Heating a one room school was no easy task! Coal was donated by the Parish Priest of the time as well as the Coastguard Station. At the start of winter half a tonne of coal would arrive and pupils then had to shovel it into a press inside the school door. They were rewarded for their efforts with a sixpence (6d). With black faces they would run down the road to Elsteds and get a packet of silver mints. An open fire with stone surround provided the sole heat in the early years.

Later a stove was instead installed to give additional heat. Pupils were expected to bring in 'kippins' to start the fire and sticks to keep it going. Some brought in 'tory tops' which burned very well.

Other pupils remembered bringing in wet sticks to encourage the fire or stove to smoke and thus delay lessons. Up to the 1950's it was mainly 6th Class boys or whoever was in school first with the kindling was expected to light the fire. After that time teachers with the help of pupils started the school day with this task.

Did you know?

During the early years of the School the families of some pupils paid fees from 2 – 6 shillings per year. In 1886 Thomas Fleming paid 2 shillings, while in 1890 John Treacy paid 6 shillings and Lizzie Loane paid 7 Shillings in fees.

As well as heating the small one roomed school, the stove was also used to heat milk at lunchtime and it gave out great heat once it got going, but it was not without controversy! If it got very hot, it used to explode and big shards of hot shrapnel from pipe and stove would go flying in every direction. Pupils still talk of ducking to avoid the debris, while others remember it hitting fellow pupils glasses and clothes. Afterwards when the stove was no longer trusted, a gas Super Ser was provided. To spread the heat during the day, this was moved from one end of the room to the other. As the school building was falling into greater disrepair, the stove difficulties along with other building issues may have been one of the reasons for closure, following it's eighty four year life span.

1913 (approx.) Patrick Corish Ballinacourty Light House Keeper: **Back** - Aidan, Mary (Nee Walsh) Peter, Joe, Patrick, Margaret, **Front** – May, Vincent, **Philomena**, Patrick (snr,) **Anna**. Those highlighted attended Ballinacourty NS. Four of the family RIP (TB) and Patrick (jnr) died in the Somme.



1930 (approx.) Foleys

Back: Paddy, Declan, Sean,

Front: Michael, Kitty and Tommy

THE QUARRY

The Quarry holds many happy memories as a playground for the local children and was the area in front of the School where the Gold Coast Houses are now built. The pupils from Barnawee Bridge and along the Coast Road used it and the 'The Cut' to shorten their walk to and from school. 'The Cut' was a path that ran alongside Terry's and Hogan's houses located at the front of the school and went right down into the quarry. Energetic young boys such as Mossie Norris recall; *'We always wanted to get to Barry's house ahead of Miss Cashman who was cycling the road on her bike, so in the evening we would rush out the school door and down through the 'The Cut' and across the quarry'*



For those who lived further away kind neighbours gave them a lift home sometimes piling them onto the back of horse and carts and later in the tractors, cars and trucks. The bikes of pupils and teachers alike were parked across the road at the start of 'The Cut' in Mary Báns (Terry). Besides an area for bikes there was also a wooden swing for the local children to use and see how high they could go. May Hogan and her brother Pad lived at the bottom of 'The Cut'. May was noted for her generosity and kindness to the children of the School. For one penny pupils used to buy apples from her and some say they can still recall the pink on the inside and the taste and smell of these delicious apples.

Due to the presence of a spring in hard winters, the water in the middle of the Quarry would freeze over. Pupils were known to skate on it providing that they could make a run for it before the teacher arrived. After school and at weekends, local boys also played football in the quarry. Thomas Hogan remembers that the teacher Mr. Brennock had a red setter and one day there was high drama when his dog broke a leg. The teacher fashioned a splint for the injured leg and some months later the dog returned to run through Ballinacourty again.



1920 Path to Ballinacourty Pier



Ballinacourty 2nd October 1918 W. Foley, Mrs. O'Brien (Teacher Ballinacourty NS), Sailor, Maurice Terry (Snr), Jack and Mary Elsted

Fundraising Concert Early 1930s



4th Row (Back) - Kathleen Daly, Molly Meehan, Josie Daly, Noreen Daly, Eileen Veale, Nell Power (NT) Mary Hanrahan, John Elsted, Paddy Daly, Dick Joy, Sean O'Brien.
3rd Row Mrs. Mather, John Kiely, Willie Power, Deckie Foley, Tom Kiely, Paddy Foley, Mary Flynn, Eileen Daly, Kitty Foley, Biddy Hanrahan, Kitty Joy, Paddy Norris, Mary Joy.
2nd Row-Willie Joy, Seamus Norris, Sean Foley, Biddy Elsted, Paddy O'Brien, Maura Daly, Josie Hanrahan, Biddy Foley, Nancy Morrissey, Eileen Fitzgerald, Eileen Power, Mickey Foley.
1st Row - Biddy Joy, Gerry Flynn, Peggy Morrissey, Norah Daly, Maureen Norris, Rena Norris, Biddy Morrissey, Kitty Foley, Statia Foley, Peggy Power, Maggie Flynn, Tommy Foley, Gusto O'Brien

FUNDRAISING CONCERTS

Although in later years it was a common occurrence to host concerts, card drives and plays such as 'Monty Mouse' for school funds, the first of these occurred in the late 1920's. During Mrs. Mathers time in the School it became apparent that Europe had changed considerably following various conflicts and wars. This rendered the school maps outdated and replacement maps were the princely sum of £11.00. This huge sum was beyond the contribution reach of local families and it was decided to hold a concert to raise the sum needed. Ably assisted by Miss Nell Power both teachers produced a concert. This included many fine costumes made by the gifted teachers. Both these costumes and concert were the talk of the area for a long time afterwards. Kitty Joy (later O'Connor RIP) recorded some years later;

'Enthusiastic pupils were sent into my uncle Tom Burke's land and while he was feeding the cattle I cut the ringlets off their tails. At the same time others plucked wool from briars and ditches where the animals sheltered. These were later used to make bespoke wigs for the concert. After many weeks of rehearsals the time finally came round for the long awaited Concert. Dick Joy and John Elsted on Tom Burke's donkey and cart went to Ballinroad and secured the platform/stage from Tommy 'The Yank' Morrissey. Along the way back home to Ballinacourty they stopped by numerous houses picking up stools and chairs marking them carefully in chalk for safe return after the Concert'

With some patrons walking from as far away as Abbeyside to see the Concert, it is safe to say that it was a huge success! So much so that it was later repeated in Ballinroad old School and overall raised enough money to buy two maps. Some years later an additional concert was held to fundraise for desks for the children. That first concert was fondly remembered, as through the purchasing of a map of Ireland (in Irish) and another map of Europe (in English), at long last the geographical insights of the pupils were brought right up to date.

THE SCHOOLS COLLECTION... 1930'S IRELAND

Back in the late 1930s Ballinacourty School, Garranbane and many other local schools sent their pupils' stories and copybooks to *The Schools Collection*. This was organised by the Irish Folklore Commission and involved collecting approximately 740,000 pages of folklore and local tradition from pupils. There was 288,000 pages in the pupils' original exercise books; 451,000 pages in bound volumes.

The pupils of the time wrote down their stories, folktales, proverbs, cures, games and pastimes, and also stories of trades and crafts they heard from parents, grandparents, and neighbours. These range from a phantom ship with many familiar names, to a story of buried gold. Instructions were given and written down on many topics; how to make baskets and candles as well as stories of cures that are not for the squeamish! The stories are exaggerated and often long winded no doubt lending themselves to storytelling on long winter nights beside the fire. They were often full of magic, old customs and curses, and many include local people and places.

THE PHANTOM SHIP

An unknown scribe from Ballinacourty NS recorded details of The Phantom Ship that includes local people and places and goes as follows: *"I and four others, Tom Tracey the Captain, Martin Veale, Mick Hayes and Martin Kelly were fishing on the Big Offing. The four of them were sleeping and I was to call them when I had caught the first two hake. I just had them caught when I saw the full-rigged ship coming down on us. I called out to the others and said there was a ship coming down on us - to come quick - she was all in white sail. The Captain, Tom Treacy, called the others and said there was a gale coming so we hauled up and reefed the mainsail and the foresail. We made for Dunmore, Passage East. Before the journey was made we had to take in two reefs. We had to stay there two days and two nights on account of bad weather. Any amount of ships were lost that same night, 56 years ago in 1882."*

STRANGE CREATURE

Another story recorded about a strange creature seems mysterious, even threatening. It may have been a seal or sea animal although what the lantern mentioned could be is unknown.

“One evening I was watching from Ballinacourty Strand to Helvic to watch the Life-Boat going off the carriage. A black object came up from the sea and watched me. I watched him until it got dark and then I went away, Maiste but he followed me and there was something like a lantern on his head. He rolled out back of Maurice Terry's, to Daly's new cottage and up to the Lios back of Gusty Kiely's. Later on he went back to the same place on the strand. He's there every winter. 'Tis like a light on an animal's back the way the light moves and jumps the ditches, his journey is from Lios to Lios.”

Interesting stories and what started out as a simple task undertaken by the pupils of Ballinacourty NS and many other pupils across the country at the time is now a virtual treasure trove of folklore for future generations of Ireland.

Did you know?

In conversation with Eddie Cantwell, Mary Elsted (later Landers RIP) recalled a time many years ago in her childhood when the Marines frequented her parent's public house. She had fond memories of an Officer Brandons daughter Alice. Mary recalled how all the children in the school loved listening to Alice speak.

1943 (approx.) Ballinacourty NS



3rd Row (Back) – Paddy Joe Morrissey, Anthony Hayes, William Flynn, Thomas Curran, William Treacy, John Murray
2nd Row – Theresa O'Brien, Nora Cooney, Joan O'Brien, Biddy Meehan, Peggy Treacy, Kathleen Hogan, Jostie Kiely.
1st Row – John Hogan, Michael Treacy, David Murray, Eddie Meehan

1946 Ballinacourty NS



3rd Row (Back) – John Hayes, Thomas Hogan, Michael Mansfield, Tommy Treacy, Dick Curran, Patick Hogan, Tony Mansfield, Joseph Murray. **2nd Row** – Jim Hayes, Dolores Hayes, Ann Marie Morrissey, Nora Daly, Coleen Mansfield, Mary Hayes, Mary Murray, Catherine O'Brien, Michael O'Brien.
1st Row- Michael Murray, Mary Elsted, Mary Hogan, Ann Darcy, Jack Elsted

ROLL BOOK 1886

REGISTER OF INFANTS IN <i>Ballymacarthy</i> NATIONAL SCHOOL.											
Date of Examination, 1886.	Register No.	Pupil's Name.	Age at Entry to School Day.	Religion or Denomination.	Residence.	Occupation or Means of Living of Parents.	Annual Examination.				Date of Examination of which this is the Register No.
							Form.	Summ.	W. of Day Term.	W. of Day Term.	
	98	Creacy John	6	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Labourer		288 X			5
	101	Burke William	6	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Do		202 X			5
	105	Burke James	5	R.C.	Do	Carpenter		195 X			5
	106	Craig Robert	5	E.C.	Do	Coal Miner		202 X	200 X		6
	109	Ryan Thomas	6	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Farmer		211 X			6
	110	Ryan John	5	R.C.	Do	Do		211 X			6
	112	Leane James	4	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Seaman	169 X	186 X			6
	113	Lerry Thomas	4	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Do		183 X			6
	114	Lerry John	5	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Labourer		147 X			
	114	Barry Patrick	7	R.C.	Ballymacarthy						
	115	Eastbrook Charles	4	E.C.	Do	Coastguard	195 X	202 X			7
4-10-86	111	Hayes Patrick	5	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Farmer					
7-2-87	116	Cummins Thomas	3	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Sailor	170 X	202 X			7
7-3-87	117	Lerry William	5	R.C.	Do	Seaman	-	133 -			8
18-4-87	118	Cahill John	5	R.C.	Do	Farmer	114 X				
30-5-87	119	Kelly John	5	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Labourer	114 X	168 X			7
28-6-87	120	Deane Michael	5	R.C.	Do	Do	167 X				8
28-6-87	121	Creacy Michael	5	R.C.	Do	Do	113 X				10
9-1-88	122	McGregor Hedley	3	E.C.	Ballymacarthy	C. Guard					
10-4-88	123	Bower Thomas	4	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Labourer	135 X	214 X	195 X		8
16-4-88	124	Reuter Fred	3	E.C.	Ballymacarthy	C. Guard					
7-5-88	125	Deane James	4	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Labourer	172 X	184 X			9
19-11-88	126	Hills William	4	E.C.	Ballymacarthy	C. Guard	204 X	200 X			9
" "	127	Bower Thomas	4	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	S. Farmer	209 X	182 X			9
17-12-88	128	Hills Jack	4	E.C.	Ballymacarthy	C. Guard	218 X	194 X	216 X		10
7-1-89	131	Craig George	3	E.C.	Do	Do	109 X	177 X	178 X		10
14-1-89	132	Hogan Jack	3	R.C.	Do	S. Farmer	113 X	184 X	178 X		10
4-4-89	133	Creacy Patrick	4	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Fisherman	167 X	173 X			9
7-1-90	134	Underhill Seymour	4	E.C.	Ballymacarthy	C. Gd.	175 0	193 X			
28-4-90	135	Cahill Patrick	4	R.C.	Do	Farmer	129 X				9
5-5-90	136	Flynn Thomas	5	R.C.	Do	Do	137 X				11
14-7-90	137	Lerry James	4	R.C.	Do	Labourer	157 X	134 X			11
" "	138	Burke Thomas	4	R.C.	Do	Do	115 X	188 X			11
" "	139	Hayes Michael	4	R.C.	Do	Do	167 X	161 X			10
12-1-91	142	Hills Charles	3	E.C.	Do	C. Gd.	154 0	202 X	212 X		
13-4-91	143	Quinlan James	4	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Labourer	121 0				
15-6-91	144	Hogan Patrick	3	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Do	193 X	205 X	185 X		12
15-6-91	145	Underhill Charles	3	E.C.	Do	Coastguard					
15-6-91	146	Lerry Thomas	3	R.C.	Do	Labourer	170 X				11
11-8-91	147	Hayes Nicholas	4	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Farmer	142 0	162 0	195 0		12
10-8-91	148	Creacy William	3	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Labourer	172 X				12
2-11-91	149	Burke Margaret	4	R.C.	Ballymacarthy	Do	117 X	200 X	200 X		12
31-3-92	150	Underhill Patrick	4	R.C.	Do	Farmer	122 X	156 X			12
8-6-92	151	Meade John	3	R.C.	Do	Labourer	152 0	152 X	137 X		13

SURNAMES OF PUPILS ASSOCIATED WITH BALLINACOURTY NS³

Allen	Craig	Gordan	Manton	Queally
Ayres	Crowe	Gough	Matteer	Quinlan
Barry	Cummins	Grey	McCarthy	Rapley
Bathelor	Curran	Hamman	McGrath	Reader
Bennett	Daly	Hanrahan	McGregor	Redmond
Bot	Darcy	Hayes	McMahon	Regan
Brandon	Dee	Heafy	McNamara	Richards
Bumpter	Donevan	Hesnan	Meade	Robinson
Burgoyne	Donoghue	Higginbotham	Meehan	Ryan
Burke	Douleavy	Higgins	Morrissey	Shaw
Burns	Downes	Hobbs	Murphy	Shea
Cahill	Doyle	Hogan	Murray	Simms
Camell	Dunphy	Jacob	Neil	Sisk
Carlton	Easterbrook	Joy	Norris	Terry
Carnell	Elsted	Keane	Northcott	Thomas
Casey	English	Kelly	O'Brien	Treacy
Cashin	Eyers	Kiely	O'Connell	Underhill
Coffey	Fisher	Kinchin	O'Connor	Veale
Coleman	Fitzgerald	Knight	O'Daly	Victor
Conroy	Fleming	Landers	O'Donnell	Vinicombre
Constant	Flynn	Leahy	Palmer	Webb
Cooney	Foley	Lemasurer	Pender	Wells
Corish	Gillard	Loane	Peyton	William
Cornish	Gleeson	Lyons	Pilcher	Wills
Coughlan	Gobels	MacNamara	Power	
Cowming	Goode	Mansfield	Prentice	

³ As the above is not an exhaustive list some surnames may be omitted. In addition some surnames were also in Irish from approx. 1924

BALLINACOURTY SCHOOL

You stand alone built of solid stone
A reminder of the days are gone
When first we ventured through your door
A timid little child of four
Teacher trying to calm our fears
Doing her best to dry our tears
Friends we made there straight away
Who are still our friends today

Now before you start the day
You had to join your hands to pray
Together we learned our A B C
That one plus one plus one made three
God made the world we were taught as well
And if you sin you'll go to hell
So we did our best to behave
As little sins they would forgive
Soon we learned to write our name
Got the odd slap off the old long cane
Then came the highlight of our day
When we were left out to play
The bell would ring at half past one
Which put an end of all our fun
Back inside to the old hard seat
Learning Irish what a treat

The girls would learn to knit and sew
Soon it would be time to go
The clock would slowly move to three
Then we grab our bags and flee
That's our school days as a rule
When we went to Ballinacourty School
In spite of all the trouble and strife
They were the best years of our life

WILLIE JOE O'CONNOR

BALLINACOURTY NATIONAL SCHOOL

TEACHERS 1885 – 1969

1885 - 1905	Mrs O'Brien
1905 - 1916	Miss Cashin
1916 - 1934	Mrs Margaret Mather
1924 - 1967	Miss Nell Power
1934 - 1943	Mr. Muiris Brennock
1943 - 1965	Miss Catherine Brennock
1965 - 1967	Mrs Margaret Browne (nee Brennock)
1967 - 1969	Mrs Joan Mansfield
1967 - 1969	Miss Susan Cashman

MISS NELL POWER

Teaching for forty three years Miss Nell Power was the longest serving teacher in the School. She was a fluent Irish speaker and taught many lessons through Irish. Her name came up again and again in the research for this book⁴. Those who were not in her good books still remember it to this day while others have memories of being teased about being 'Teachers Pet'. Miss Power taught the younger classes from Infants to 2nd Class. She was a strict disciplinarian but some have memories of her bringing her black dog to school on either the last or first day of the school year. Living near the school in Ballinard, she had many family connections to her pupils.

⁴No more Irish no more French no more sitting on a hard old bench
Kick up tables kick up chairs kick Nell Power down the stairs
If old Kitty interferes catch her up and box her ears

In the early years of her career Miss Power had great patience with the younger children. Pakie Hogan recalled; *'She taught the children very well, to recognise words, to join the dots between shapes to form letters and words, to read, and also add and subtract figures'*



1954 First Communion Ballinacourty NS

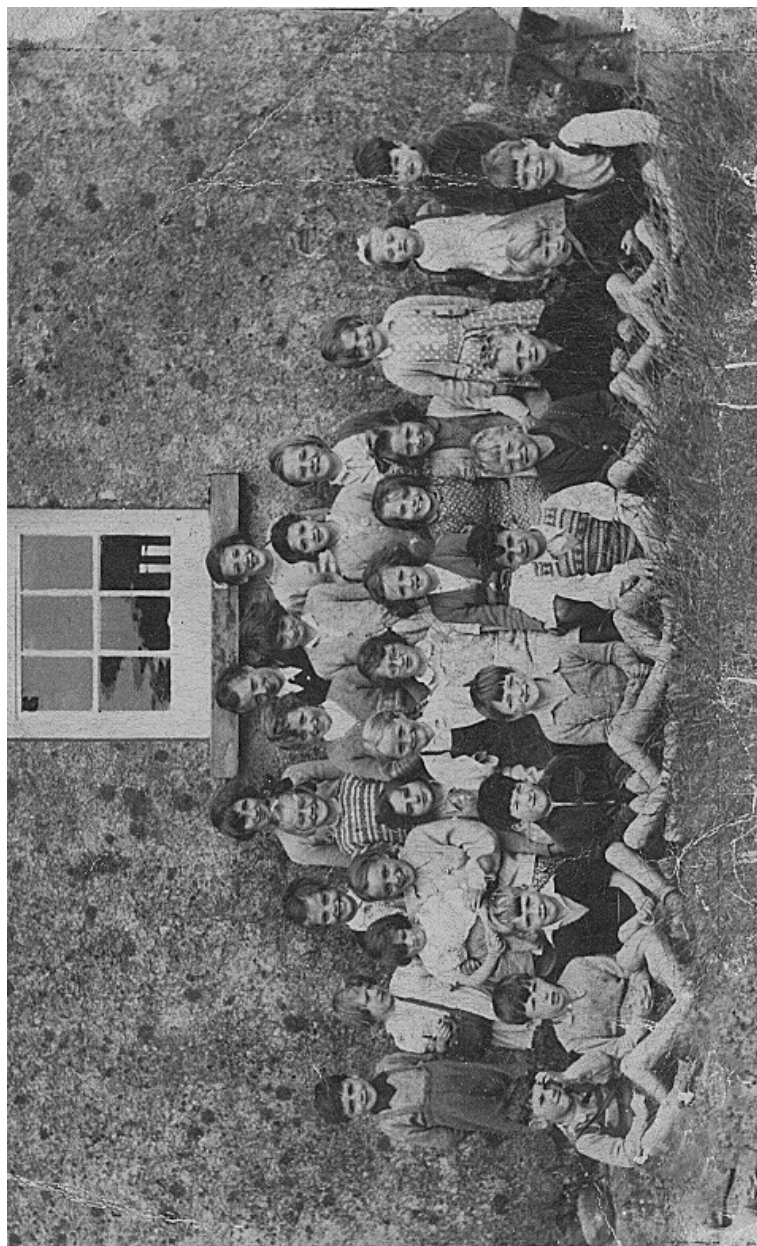
Back Row: Mrs Casey, Catherine O'Brien, Bridie Curran, Margaret Casey, Nell Power (NT)

Front Row: Patricia Casey, Vera O'Brien, Bridget Curran, Pat McMahon, PJ Barry, WJ O'Connor

The day that Miss Power bought a new Hillman Minx car was cause for great chat and excitement among the school pupils. This car must have made a great impression on Willie Joe O'Connor as to this day he remembers the registration number as *KI 6627*. Now instead of going to Mass in the pony and trap, the Minx was a new improved mode of transport.

Miss Power liked to be warm and would pack up to the potbellied stove with sticks and coal. As it heated up she would rub her hands vigorously together with a grin on her face. At social occasions such as weddings or in school Nell was known to have a beautiful voice, her favourite song being 'I'll walk beside you'. It can be said therefore that in one way or another Miss Nell Power made a great impression on the lives of the school children of Ballinacourty National School.

1954 Ballinacourty NS



4th Row (Back) - Margaret Morrissey, Eileen O'Connor, Mary Hogan. **3rd Row** - Vera O'Brien, Mary Barry, Mary Casey, Joan Morrissey, Annie Hogan, Winne Conroy. **2nd Row** - Paddy Burns, Mary O'Connor, Ena Gough, Margaret Barry, Kathleen Kiely, Mary Ann Conroy, Ann Casey, Bridget Curran, Kathleen O'Connor, Mary Daly, Breda Daly, Ann Simms, Johnny Norris. **1st Row** - Eddie Elsted, Willie Joe O'Connor, Liam Simms, Pat Norris, Liam Morrissey, Pat McMahon, Paddy Joe Barry, Paul Conroy, Ned O'Connor, Martin Anthony Barry.



1956 St Laurence's Hall

Sixth Row: (Back) Jim Morrissey, Jimmy Power, John Murray

Fifth Row: Tommie Morrissey, John Elstead, John Higgins, Jim Hayes, David Murray, John McCarthy, Declan Foley, Eamonn Foley (child), Paddy Joe Morrissey, Pats Cummins, Richard Morrissey, Michael Treacy

Fourth Row: Martin Barry, Mike Treacy, Josie Kiely, Margaret Morrissey, Peggie Hanrahan, Joan Morrissey, Josie Daly, Biddy Morrissey, Martin Foley, Garry Morrissey, Sally Walsh, Paddy Joe Dwane, Gerald Morrissey, Paddy Daly, Christy Meehan, Anthony Hayes.

Third Row: Maura Simms, Kitty O Connor, Maggie Veale, Mary B. Tobin, Chris Walsh, Maggie Murray, Kitty Foley, Fr. Michael Walsh, Bridie Curran, Jack Elsted, Tom Landers, Danny Barry

Second Row: Gail Elsted, Willie Joe O Connor, Ned O Connor, Liam Simms, Mary O Connor, Mary Landers, Bridget Curran, Mary McCarthy, John McCarthy, Tommy McCarthy, John Landers, Paddy J. Barry, Jim Power, Liam Morrissey, Kathleen Barry, Margaret Barry

Front Row : Ann Foley Noel Murray, John Foley, Anthony Simms, Laurence Hanrahan, Ann Simms, Bridget Barry, Eddie Elsted, Martin A. Barry, Kathleen Kiely, Margaret Elsted

ROLL CALL

ANN MARIE FOLEY

Summer roll call
echoes in classroom
from ditches.

Margarita,
wild rose,
honeysuckle
montbretia
pinks.
“Present”.

Elder froth of flower
will ripen, darken,
by autumn.

Roses sprout hips,
children grow taller
tanned.
Till all back,
answer “Present”
again.

A ROUNDED EDUCATION

PUPILS

The highest number of students attending Ballinacourty NS at the one time was approx. 52. The ‘Rolla’ was called everyday with just 32 registered in the final months of the school. The occupations of the fathers of pupils ranged from; Workman, Carpenter, Farmer, Labourer, Lighthouse Keeper, Coastguard, Sailor, Fisherman, Tailor, Shopkeeper, Publican. Being a rural community the children often walked to school playing as they went and having an occasional spitting competition along the way. Once in school they received a very practical but rounded education.

In the early years between 1885/86 and the early 1900's there were names such as: Northcott (Leonard), Easterbrook (Charles, George and Frank, Fanny, Caroline and Kate), Underhill (Seymor), Douleavy (George and Alfred), Gillard (Thomas), Knight (Ernest and George, Eva, Hilda Rose and Edith), and Reader (Frank, John and Birtia). Many of these names were associated with the Coastguard Station. Other than this there are few records linking those families to Ballinacourty or even Co Waterford. Official records such as Griffiths Valuation are too early and the census in 1851 has no record of the names in Waterford. The 1901 census does include some of these surnames names but only one in Co Waterford.

Did you know?

In the 1901 Census a George Easterbrook aged 46 was listed as living in the coastguards house in Newcastle West in Co Wicklow. He was married, his religion was Church of Ireland and hailed from Devonshire in England. He was given the rank of Chief Boatman in Charge of H.M. Coastguard. Could it be that he was a Coastguard in or near Ballinacourty in late 1880's and his son young George plus brothers and sisters went to school there?

THE 3R's

The core subjects of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic (3R's) formed the basis of each day. Those who sat the Primary Certificate did so in Garranbane School and Joan O'Brien still remembers this important exam. Pupils from Ballinacourty NS were very impressed with a very modern and spacious Garranbane school. After this exam some pupils returned for 7th Class and as well as continuing to learn themselves also helped 5th and 6th classes with their work. To prepare for the County Scholarship Exam additional after school help in Algebra was given by Miss Brennock. It was only years later pupils recognised how generous she was to give of her free time to help them prepare for this exam.



1948 Communion
Pakie and Mary Hogan

Good handwriting was key and so penmanship evolved through the ages starting with slates, then pencils, and finally onto nib and ink. Who remembers filling the ink wells? In an effort to make them right handed some 'citogs' still remember having their left hand tied behind their back forcing them to write with their right hand instead. Different times indeed! Class books were handed down from one class to another. Cait and Eddie Elsted were together for third and fourth class. They both remember sharing the same books with string and thumb marks marking their relevant pages.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment was the order of the day and this School was no different than any other of its time. Pupils felt the weight of the stick be it for not knowing an answer or for the more glamorous activity of mitching on the Golf Club grounds. The teacher sat at a high desk with a stick within easy reach at all times. The children sometimes hid the stick but at times this resulted in more severe punishment for the perpetrators for a long time afterwards. Regular tests were carried out by teachers. Copying in class was met with stern punishment! One past pupil copied a fellow student's work including his name and immediately felt the teacher's wrath.

INSPECTOR'S REPORTS

An overview of the Department of Education Inspectors Reports from late 1800's to early 1920's shows mixed satisfaction with pupil progress. Inspectors in an early School Reports commented; *'Good work was being done but there was lots of copying in senior classes.... Do a little and do it well.... The preservation of order was middling but the moral tone in the school was good'*

Early reports in 1891 indicate that needlework, grammar and geography could do with improvement. By 1898 progress seemed to have been made in these subjects. Comments in 1915 and 1922 highlighted that; *'Pupils were not wanting in intelligence'*. This was followed in 1922 with a recommendation that *'instruction needed to appeal more to students'*.



1950 Margaret, Mary, Gail and Jack Elsted

In the early years Inspectors also noted that on return visits their advice was not always followed! In those days teacher's salaries may have been linked to these Inspectors Reports. It is no wonder the teachers were anxious that students would appear well prepared for the Inspectors visits. In an era where children

were seen and not heard it is interesting to note that several Inspectors also highlighted that it was important to ensure that when asked a question that; *'Pupils did not whisper to each other. They needed to be encouraged to speak out more fluently and with distinction'*.

LIFE SKILLS AND HEALTH

Life skills were also seen as important in the school and pupils were taught a variety of non-academic subjects such as singing and knitting. The weather in the weeks leading up to the Summer holidays always seemed to be fine and dry. Desks were brought outside and pupils were taught singing and the recorder in the playground⁵ where their lovely voices could be heard all across the Golf Club and down to the pier. Miss Brennock's brother Plunkett was the Conductor of the Artane Boys Band, and she used one of his batons to conduct the singing pupils. Needlework was also brought outside and the pupils were tutored sewing and knitting with turning the heel of a sock being a particular challenge and memory for some pupils! Cookery was introduced in 1917 and recorded in an Inspectors report as being 'most popular'. The Long Jump was a favourite sport played by all in the School. Perhaps the attraction was that it was held over the wall in the Golf Club. During her time in the School Vera O'Brien was the unbeaten champion and try as they might no one could beat the length of her jump.

The school Doctor visited each year to examine pupils and while there also administered the various childhood vaccinations. While he was there heads also were examined thoroughly for nits! The school Dentist came too and gave follow up appointments for those who were unlucky enough to need them.

⁵**Queenio, Queenio** who has the ball, Is she big or is she small, Is she fat or is she thin, or is she like a needle pin, Queenio, Queenio, who has the ball?.

Regardless of how rural the pupil's background was Mrs. Browne felt that student's shoes should be always clean and tidy and was known to inspect all pupils' shoes, noting that she had the same pair of shoes for over twenty years and polished them every night! This was quite different to her charges who polished shoes only on a Saturday night in preparation for Mass on Sunday.



1951 Confirmation Mary Elsted and Ann Marie Morrissey

In the mid 1960's Ballinacourty NS joined forces with Garranbane school and under the leadership of Principal Tom McHugh went to Dublin on a school tour. After a visit to the zoo and shopping Michael Hanrahan has fond memories of playing on the hallowed grounds of Croke Park. Tom McHugh was in goal for Ballinacourty while the bus driver was in goal for Garranbane.

The earliest school picture appears to be from 1926/27. Although the photographers are not identified it is believed that pictures were taken by Edmond Keoghan and Tom Tobin. In addition May Hogan had a box

camera and she also took many of the school pictures. Today in 2019 these beautiful black and white pictures tell their own story of a school that did its very best to educate its pupils from the local community. In the words of Catherine O'Brien *'All I learned in Ballinacourty National School grounded me for life'*.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

Religious observance was taken very seriously by many teachers in Ballinacourty NS. The children of the area walked to St. Laurence's Church in Ballinroad to confession on the first Saturday of the month. On the second Sunday of the month all had to attend half eleven mass in Ballinroad and regardless of whether they could sing or not sang in the choir where hymns were sung in Latin and in later years often ably assisted by Sean O'Brien. Many years after she left Ballinacourty NS Kitty Joy (later O'Connor RIP) recalled an alarm clock ringing every day at 12 noon as a reminder to all to stop what they were doing to say The Angelus. She also remembered a Missioner who came to the school and spoke about China. For many years afterwards local families subscribed to the 'Far East' magazine. During this time pennies were also collected for the Missions. Each year the 'Stations Mass' would be held in the school and this led to a great flurry of preparations. To raise the height of the altar sprouting boxes would be cleaned and on top of these a table would be placed and then dressed in altar cloths. All the neighbours in the area would then attend and bring their 'Station envelope' as their family's contribution for the upkeep of their clergy and parish.

EXACT WORDING ONLY PLEASE!

From the late 1800's and right into the 1960's children of the Coastguards and Light House Keepers were taught in the School. Some of these children were not of the Catholic faith and were excused from religion classes. For all other pupils exact wording in all things religious was paramount. On being late for school one day Catherine O'Brien remembers being asked '*is a lie always a sin*' on not giving the exact answer from the Red Catechism, received two fine slaps on her hand from an ash plant. To this day she remembers the answer the teacher wanted; '*A lie is always a sin and nothing can ever make it lawful*'.

RELIGIOUS EXAM

Religious Examination Day in Ballinacourty NS appeared to have been the most important date in the School Calendar. Many pupils recall being very much in fear of this day. Preparations began months in advance and as the dreaded day drew nearer pupils had to memorise the exact words from the Green and more advanced Red Catechism. In the blue, black and red questions they pointed out words as they read and at times where particularly difficult words needed to be memorised, such was the pupil's endeavour that pages had holes in places with the words missing. Now many years later past pupils also have commented that prayers learned in the school are still going strong today.



1951 Communion
Annie Hogan

Fr. Roche PP cycled out from Abbeyside weekly with his dog running beside him. The dog must have been hungry by the time he got to the school as once there all lunches had to be put away securely in bags as he had a habit of finding and eating them! During his visits, Fr. Roche questioned the pupils prior to the exam day when Diocesan Inspectors Fr. Lawn or Fr. Hopkins arrived and thoroughly examined the children's knowledge of the Catholic Faith. On the day nervous pupils went to school dressed in their 'Sunday Best' scrubbed clean and ready, some pupils even getting new clothes. Following some late nights knitting by Mrs. Hanrahan the boys of the family remember being turned out in matching Aran jumpers.

DIOCESAN INSPECTOR



For weeks before the Diocesan Inspector all other lessons were put on hold and parables like 'The Sermon on the Mount' would be drummed into the children. Other answers had to be exact and to the point and God help anyone who deviated from the set text! Pupils who were too young (or too shy!) to recall answers were encouraged by the examining priest to identify those who were in pictures in the Bible stories book.

1955 Communion Pat, Nell, Nellie, Pats, Johnny, Jimmy and Johnny Norris

News of this shyness was brought home by older brothers or sisters in the school to their parents. It appears some of the then younger students later recalled as adults that this 'news' had been frowned upon by parents and seen as letting the side down.

Those unfortunate students in the higher classes who were not well versed (or too nervous) in their answers were particularly unfortunate in the reception received from the teacher after the priest had left the school! However, in recognition of their sterling preparation all pupils were always thankful to get the rest of the exam day off.

Throughout the 1950's Fr. Hopkins gave a glowing report on pupils. On Tuesday 28th March 1955 the report indicated that thirty four pupils were examined and overall the school was rated 'Very Satisfactory'. In his subsequent report to Bishop Daniel Cohalan (Diocese of Waterford and Lismore) it was noted;

It is a pleasure to examine the children of this school. Besides having an excellent knowledge of the prescribed Catechism and Bible programmes, they answer out very well. This shows that besides committing to memory, they understand what they have been taught'

Like all other schools at the time in Ballinacourty NS, prayers were taught, the Red and Green Catechism memorised word for word and pupils were prepared for the sacraments of Communion and Confirmation. Overall in all things during its eighty four year span, the rhythm of the school year very much revolved around religious observance of the Catholic Faith.

ABBEYSIDE, BALLINROAD AND GARRANBANE PARISH PRIESTS AND CURATES (1881-1969)

Very Rev. R Dunphy PP (1881-1892)

Fr. Thomas Cummins 1892

Very Rev. P. Coffey PP (1892-1895)

Fr. Daniel F. Walsh 1893

Fr. William Kelly 1893

Fr. Lawrence Ormond 1894

Fr. James Egan 1894

Very Rev. J. Power PP (1895-1898)

Fr. Denis Egan 1897

Fr. Michael Lonergan 1897

Very Rev. W. Queally PP (1898-1898)

Very Rev. Patrick Walsh PP (1898-1900)

Very Rev. P. Byrne PP (1900-1924)

Fr. Nicholas Power 1902

Fr. William Nagle 1906

Fr. Thomas Galvin 1910

Fr. Jerome Coffey 1912

Fr. William Hickey 1913

Fr. Daniel Morrissey 1913

Fr. John Cullinan 1916

Fr. Thomas O'Gorman 1917

Fr. Henry Conway 1917

Fr. William Flynn 1920

Fr. Joseph Rea 1920

Very Rev. W. Walsh PP (1924-1928)

Fr. David Power 1925

Fr. John Cullinan 1926

Fr. James Phelan 1927

Very Rev. M. Crotty PP (1928- 1930)

Fr. Michael Power 1930

Very Rev. N Dunphy PP (1933-1942)

Fr. Richard Walsh 1952

Very Rev. J. Roche PP (1943-1970)

Fr. Michael Walsh

(1952-1973)

FIRST COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION

In preparing their pupils for First Holy Communion, the teachers of Ballinacourty NS left no stone unturned and nothing was left to chance. This ranged from ensuring that each one had a prescribed list of 'sins' for their first confession to practicing (while kneeling on the gravel in the yard) receiving and swallowing paper shaped 'host'. Mossie Norris has a very clear memory of receiving this host made of either jotting paper or newspaper, while Cait Elsted remembers it being made from ice cream wafers. Pupils had to be the required seven years of age by the May of the relevant year. If this was not the case it was not unknown for children to be held back a year to instead receive the Sacrament the following year.

Having tutored her pupils spiritually for the day Miss Power was also known to give the boys and girls prayer books and rosary beads. Snuffing noses were also catered for as pupils were also well versed on how after receiving the Host and saying their prayers, on cue each pupil was required to take out a white cotton handkerchief and blow their noses at the same time.

The pupils of Ballinacourty National School made their confirmation in St. Augustine's Church in Abbesside, as it was the main Church of the parish. In earlier years the Bishop would question the pupils on their knowledge of their faith before the sacrament was given. Thankfully this was phased out by the time the school closed!



28th May 1969
Confirmation Medal
Mossie Norris

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

From 1885 Ballinacourty NS showed a strong attendance by children from the local area. Given that school was not made compulsory until some years later local parents from the late 1800's appeared to have been ahead of their time and saw education as the way forward. From the establishment of the school there was consistent and long term attendance by many pupils. However, as the school was located in a then rural agricultural community sometimes this attendance fluctuated with the crop growing seasons of the area. In addition, it was not unknown for children to miss school to help at home and some families helped launder soldier's uniforms during the World War Two. At home for many pupils it was usually 'all hands on deck' to help with ploughing, setting potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, beet, turnips etc. and also at harvest time.



Despite the demands of home pupils were encouraged to attend every day during the School year. To focus their charges, the teaching staff gave prizes to those who did not miss a day. Breed Elsted⁶ won a little silver cup (pictured) that she still has in her possession. It's about three inches tall and she remembers being very excited to win it. She was though a bit envious of those pupils who won frequently and especially when

someone won a satellite type toy. All the pupils were in awe of this fantastic prize!

⁶**Alley Alleyio** The big ship sailed on the Alley Alleyio, the Alley, Alleyio, the Alley Alleyio. The big ship sailed on the Alley Alleyio on the last day of September

For those whose attendance was irregular the weekly visit of the School Attendance Guard held its own tensions. Two such noted guards were Paddy Strain and his colleague Dan Regan. They would inspect the Roll Book and those who came to their attention on more than one occasion would be quizzed in school or if not there on the day, receive a home visit.

Pupils came up with a myriad of reasons for their absence! Thomas Hogan recalls a popular excuse as *'I was minding the house'*. This could include minding chickens, calves, younger brothers and sisters or helping around the house in general. This did not impress the guards as often their reply was *'I'm sure the house could mind itself'*. Long term school truancy offenders would be threatened with 'The Blue School' a colloquial name for the Industrial Schools at the time.



1958 Richie Goode



1960 Confirmation Cait and Eddie Elsted

SCHOOLING

Paws on my almost four year old shoulders,
Teacher's black dog, his face in mine,
her 'sit' for me, not the dog,
Nell Power dad calls her.
Bun, thin glasses, laces all spell retire,
sum total of years
bring her escape.

Not us children,
we must learn the time,
the bell rings of each day,
"Tá mé, tá tú, tá sé."

Apples in Mrs Morrissey's for taking,
and trees for climbing,
birds test the quiet with their songs,
all day the yard awaits,
silent and alone,
till our return,
but homework calls.

When by inches children and trees have grown,
Nell presses a rosary in my palm,
shimmering crimson for confirmation,
adds some pounds,
from hands white once with chalk.
Now in the salt-slapped hilltop home,
she hears each tick tock.

ANN-MARIE FOLEY



1961 Nell, Jimmy and Mike Norris



1961 Mary and Eileen Higginbotham



1965 Tony and Breed Elsted

SPECIAL CELEBRATORY EVENTS AT BALLINACOURTY NS

HALLOWEEN

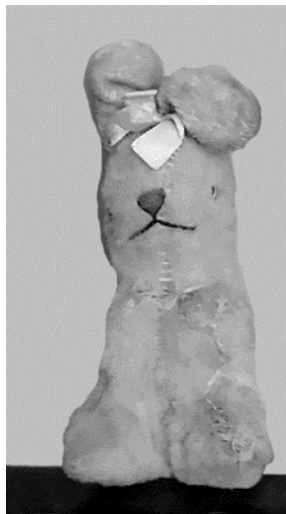
At Halloween the children of Ballinacourty NS played 'Snap Apple' when the most agile took bites of an apple hanging from a string. In addition they dived into basins of water for three and six penny pieces where the bravest pupils became richer as long as they could stay underwater to grab the coins.

CHRISTMAS

Every year through the generosity of the Stephenson family and the Parish Priest of the time, a Christmas Party was held in the School. A fare of red lemonade, cake and sweets was provided to very happy pupils. In addition a large table covered in toys was placed in the middle of the floor. Some years, complete in his red suit Santa's, helper visited and in the 1950's it was reported this helper may have been Deagie Terry who afterwards refused to confirm or deny it!



1965 Barry and Theresa Goode



For fear of being lost in the subsequent melee, the junior pupils had first choice of the Christmas presents and once this was done all others were welcome to take their pick. The only known surviving gift to this day is in the proud possession of Theresa Goode, namely this much loved small pink rabbit with resplendent ears. This bunny truly is a priceless treasure from one of the final Christmas parties held in the School.

HALF DAYS

Half days from school were few and far between in Ballinacourty NS. When the Killossera Races were held on a weekday afternoon, the students always waited anxiously for the man in the van (Vinny Morrissey) to arrive. Once he arrived, the teacher announced a half day. Now many years later those pupils have no memory of actually attending the said races but of the half day they received. Another fond memory of a half day was when Waterford won the All-Ireland in 1959. Needless to say this was not repeated in the life time of the School!

REFLECTIONS ON BALLINACOURTY NATIONAL SCHOOL

Ballinacourty National School was built in 1884-1885 and for 84 years it served as the seat of learning for the children of Ballinacourty and the surrounding area. In 1969, the tiny school was amalgamated with Abbeyside National School and its closure brought an end to one chapter in its history. There were 32 children on roll at closure and examining the roll books of the time. It is interesting to note many of those are still living and working locally. Fr Richard Dunphy was Parish Priest of the area in 1884. On land donated by the Stephenson Family he, together with a very supportive group of parishioners, undertook to build the first National School in Ballinacourty. Prior to that, a small mixed one teacher school had operated in Ballinroad at a time when education was not compulsory. With the assistance of state grants and much voluntary labour by locals, the new Ballinacourty structure was completed in 1885.

Mrs O'Brien was the first of a group of dedicated individuals who served in the one room school. On retirement after 20 years of duty, she was succeeded by Mary Cashin, who in turn, was succeeded by Mrs. Margaret Mather. During Mrs Mather's time an assistant teacher, Miss Nell Power, was assigned to the school, providing much-needed help as the attendance had risen to approximately 50 pupils. When Mrs. Mather retired in 1934 after 18 years at the helm, her place as Principal was taken by Muiris Brennock. He was the first of three members of his family who became involved in the school. He was followed as Principal by his sister, Catherine, who in turn was succeeded by another sister, Mrs Browne. She retired in 1967 and the final years of Ballinacourty National School were overseen by Joan Mansfield and Susan Cashman with Babs Kiely as temporary assistant. Both Joan and Susan transferred to the amalgamated Scoil Mhuire.

Great occasions were celebrated such as the Christmas party which is still fondly remembered by many pupils. First Communion and Confirmations were an integral part of the school calendar as were concerts and fund raising events. Parents were always appreciative of the work done and were there to offer support as needed.

So what has become of the little stone building? Like the little toy soldier - sturdy and staunch it stands - with no laughing voices or singing hymns but silent and stoic. Now home to a variety of machinery and course equipment, and indeed many lost balls, it defiantly stands in the line of the first tee-shot in the Gold Coast Golf Club. It has caused grief to many a golfer when a nervous first shot comes to rest within its hallowed walls!⁷

JOAN MANSFIELD

NUTS IN MAY

Will you come gathering nuts in May
nuts in May, nuts in May

Will you come gathering nuts in May
on a cold and frosty morning

Yes, we will come gathering nuts in May
nuts in May, nuts in May

Yes, we will come gathering nuts in May
On a cold and frosty morning

Who will we have for nuts in May,
nuts in May, nuts in May

Who will we have for nuts in May on a cold and frosty morning

We will have (name) for nuts in May, nuts in May, nuts in May.
We will have (name) for nuts in May
On a cold and frosty morning

⁷Abridged from 'Ballinroad, Our Church, People and Places', Tom Keith (2004)

MEMORIES OF THE FINAL YEARS OF BALLINACOURTY NATIONAL SCHOOL

I arrived in the school on Feb 1st 1967 to teach Infants up to 2nd Class. As Principal Mrs Browne was coming to the end of her teaching career and I had just started mine. "Hurry up" she said to me, "We must see if there is any glass on the floor and desks". This was my first day and introduction to Ballinacourty School NS. Due to golfing at the weekends teachers had to be there early every morning but particularly on Mondays. Mrs Browne and myself became very handy with hammers and nails trying to keep the wind and rain out in the winter/spring. There was no electricity in the school so we relied on the windows for light, so the more golf balls, the less light, until Fr. Roche PP could get them repaired.

Facilities were scarce in the School; the dry toilets outside for the children became a bit whiffy in the summer. There were no toilets for the teachers who instead had to go to Elsteds whenever the need arose, or hold on till you got home. All books, charts etc. had to be taken home every day as we had lots of hungry four legged friends who visited each night and helped themselves to what was available! For heating though we did have a pot-belly stove which was great, with plenty of coal and sticks until the day it exploded. Nobody was hurt thank God but we were all shocked. Afterwards we got a Super Ser gas heater instead to heat the one room school. At least then we didn't have to clean and light the stove every day!!!

When Mrs Browne retired, Mrs Mansfield came in as new Principal. She shortly moved into Abbeyside Girls School as Principal and I was left on my bike to get to school. The first wet morning I was packing a change of clothes when there was a knock on the front door. There before me was Mickey Foley with his car, to take me and my bike to school and home again if necessary. If he wasn't available another parent was there on duty. They were all fantastic supportive parents both in and out of the classroom.



1969 Confirmation Teresa O'Connor, Gerard Daly, Tony Elsted, Mary Hanrahan, Barry Goode, Mossie Norris, Bernadette Hanrahan, Bernadette Morrissey

Monday June 30th 1969 was the last day of Ballinacourty School NS. We were all moving to the newly amalgamated school of Abbeyside boys and girl's schools and Ballinacourty NS. The following day Tuesday 1st July 1969, both the children on the bus and myself on foot began the next step in our lives with some trepidation on all sides.

SUSAN CASHMAN

POSTSCRIPT One day during a lesson a golf ball came crashing through the school window. Some pupils remember Miss Cashman calmly shaping an old cornflakes box to pane size, pinned it in place and then continued teaching!

"LAETHANTA GEAL M'ÓIGE"

MY BRIGHT CHILDHOOD DAYS

Ballinacourty is a tiny area of the Déise in rural County Waterford, and the pupils who attended its now long closed National School have settled in the local area and beyond. Some have travelled to nearby England with other more adventurous pupils like Joan O'Brien and Mossie Norris settling in America, and Timmy Foley to Australia to name but a few. What has remained constant over the years for many past pupils is their link to the area and carefree memories of growing up in Ballinacourty.

'For some reason, my childhood memories of going to school in Ballinacourty always include recollections of the nearby attraction of Elsted's Pub. At that time in the early sixties, as well as a public house, the premises also included a shop. If we were lucky enough to have a few pennies, sweets would be purchased. On the return journey we may have had to collect small items of groceries to carry home.

In 1965 Ballinacourty won the County Intermediate Football Championship. The following day before school, I remember arriving at Elsteds and seeing an incredible number of bottles and glasses outside the pub, across the road, they were everywhere. Frankie Ryan and I gave Mrs. Elsted a hand to collect them. I am sure she was unaware that as we went along, I was finishing all the bottles that weren't completely empty. It showed great presence of mind for a five year old.

On March 8th 1966, Republicans in Dublin blew up Nelson's Pillar. The incident made nationwide headlines but as a six year old I wasn't much interested in reading and we possibly did not have a TV at that time. Not knowing who Nelson was I jumped to the conclusion that it was Elsted's Pillar that had been blown up.



1965 Marty, Timmy, Johnny and Ann-Marie Foley

I could not think of any good reason why someone should choose to damage the entrance to the rear of the pub. Clearly though in light of the outcry that must have been what had happened! As soon as school finished I headed downhill to the Pub to assess the damage. Apart from a few scratches and small dents the pillar of the gateway looked fine to me. I worked out in due course where Nelson's Pillar actually was situated. Until then I thought the whole affair was a real storm in a teacup.



There was a real explosion once in the school itself when something in stove in the centre of the room detonated. Don't know what caused it but I do remember a piece of smoking metal landing on the clothes of Ursula Daly who sat in front of me, missing Mary Norris who sat beside her. The school was promptly evacuated but we couldn't be sent home without the ok of the Parish Priest. Eventually we were given a 'leath lá' and scooted home in a downpour to our surprised parents.

It is a sobering thought to comprehend that a half century has passed since we walked to school unaccompanied, played tig unsupervised in Hogan's Quarry, climbed cliffs and trees with abandon, indulged in skidding competitions on muddy patches after rain, played on the pier and got up to all sorts of devilment. It was a simpler time and we are blessed to have memories like those to look back on'.

TIMMY FOLEY

1969 Ballinacourty NS



4th Row (Back)- Johnny Foley, Joe Daly, Barry Goode, Billy Daly, Mike Norris, Gerard Daly, Mossie Norris, Jim Ryan, Tony Elsted, Mary Morrissey. **3rd Row** - Veronica Barry, Caroline Terry, Bernie Hanrahan, Bernie Morrissey, Mary Hanrahan, Josephine Dunphy, Theresa Barry, Ann Ryan, Susan Cashman (NT) **2nd Row** - Martin Ryan, James Morrissey, Marty Foley, Kevin Barry, John Morrissey, Frankie Ryan, Timmy Foley, Gerard Ryan, Pat Flynn
1st Row - Theresa Goode, Ursula Daly, Ann- Marie Foley, Mary Norris



3rd Row (Back) Billy Daly, Mary Morrissey, Caroline Terry, Bernie Morrissey, Tony Elsted, Jim Ryan, Kevin Barry, Gerry Ryan, Johnny Morrissey, Pat Flynn, Joe Daly **2nd Row** Theresa Barry, Ann Ryan, Susan Cashman **1st Row** Johnny Foley, Mary Norris, Ann-Marie Foley, Theresa Goode and Marty Foley

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We hope that the memories, stories and pictures contained in this book will serve as a testament to the many generations of children from the area who received their early education in Ballinacourty National School.

For eighty four years Ballinacourty NS in Co. Waterford educated the children of the area and subsequently closed its doors for the final time in 1969. This book is a timely memoir of our School that has now been closed for fifty years. Whether we are aware of it or not, the days spent in the school have had an enduring influence in the lives of all past pupils both at home and abroad and one to which many emotional connections still remain in 2019.

